

Points from Letters

WASP STINGS

Lieutenant-Colonel Buck's letter on wasp stings in *The Times* of August 20 is wrong in recommending washing soda. Bee stings are acid and should be treated with dilute alkalis (e.g., ammonia, bicarbonate of soda, washing soda). Wasp stings are alkaline and should be treated with dilute acids (e.g., lemon juice, vinegar). Onion juice has an acid-reaction, hence its traditional use. This was first pointed out by Mr. Edward R. Speyer in a letter to *The Times* published on August 20, 1919, exactly 19 years ago to-day (August 20). His experimental proof can be repeated by anyone with litmus paper, while the efficacy of treatment on these lines proves itself immediately. Iodine should never be used.—Dr. O. H. BOWEN, 77, Woodbridge Hill, Guildford, Surrey.

A FOLK SONG

I was very interested in the Rev. A. L. Brown's letter asking about the origin of the last two lines of the old folk song, sung to children 50 to 70 years ago. I knew it very well, and I think he has only got the first line right. Our version was—

Little of London
Silver bells of York
A bunch of keys at Weehoby
And pretty Jack at Thorp

—Mrs. GARDNER, Alverton, Northallerton, Yorks.

THE WIRELESS NUISANCE

Recently the B.B.C. requested wireless owners to consider their neighbours during the open-window season. Since then, in my neighbourhood in London, the noise has been, if possible, worse than before. The other Sunday the din started at 9.30 a.m. and continued all day. Back and front it was equally maddening and rest was impossible. Down here, so far, I have not heard a loud-speaker and the peace and quiet is most soothing after the hideous and perpetual racket I have had to endure for the past few months. One complaint should be sufficient to justify a warning, followed by suspension of licence if the offense is repeated.—GWEN M. OWEN, at Copper Beech Hotel, Glastonbury.

RUMANIA AND HUNGARY

While it is admitted that even under the 1910 census more than 50 per cent. of the population of Rumania was purely Rumanian, this percentage consisted of persons who had emigrated from the territories of Old Rumania. They were thus immigrants, and up to the last century played but an insignificant part in the political life of Transylvania. They had no social structure of their own—both the economic and cultural supremacy was in the hands of the Magyar and Saxon races. This explains Mr. Bowden's assertion in *The Times* of August 15 that the majority of official posts and almost all the higher schools were in the hands of the Magyars. The fact that there existed this large percentage of uneducated Rumanians could not be attributed to a lack of provision of schools. Nearly half the elementary schools at this date were for Rumanians and supported by a large annual subsidy from the Hungarian Government. Nevertheless, even to-day, the Magyars in Transylvania exercise marked cultural supremacy. I would ask Mr. Bowden, finally, whether he considers it in the interests of civilization and justice to take away the government of such a territory from a people showing a marked superiority in all branches of public life, and who constitute the original element occupying this territory.—Mr. W. B. MORRELL.

OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOLS

In *The Times* of August 19 there is a report from your Newton Abbot Correspondent which states that Ashburton Grammar School, founded in 1314, is the oldest school of its kind in England. I beg to point out, Sir, that this statement is not correct, and I should be grateful if you would kindly grant me space to quote the following extracts from the Victoria History of the County of Derby with regard to Derby School, formerly called the Grammar School, which is still, I am pleased to say, a flourishing educational institution:—

The earliest mention of Derby School yet found is in a charter of Walter Durdent, Bishop of Chester; the charter may be described as c.1160. It cannot be later than December 7, 1159, or earlier than October 2, 1149. Durdent is not by this charter pretending to found the School of Derby; he is sanctioning the transfer of an existing institution.

You will thus see, Sir, that Derby School is at least 154 years older than Ashburton School, and probably even older than that. At the same time I would like to express my regret at the closing of the younger school, which event must, I am sure, be a real grief to the people of Ashburton, Buckfastleigh, and neighbouring towns.—COUNCILLOR WILLIAM SMITHARD, 70, Empress Road, Derby.

"SHOD" GEESE

About 30 years ago I was told by an old man that he remembered geese in Lincolnshire being shod for their walk to Nottingham Goose Fair by being driven first through pitch then through sand.—Mrs. H. B. BARTRAM, 29, Overstrand Mansions, S.W.11.

MIR. GLADSTONE

In the interest of historical accuracy I would like to point out that Sir Henry Lunn is incorrect when he writes that the famous speech of Disraeli from which he quotes was made at Guildhall. As a matter of fact it was delivered on July 27, 1878, in the Duke of Wellington's Riding School at Knightsbridge, when the Duke of Buckleuch presided over a meeting of Conservative members of both Houses of Parliament. Sir Henry Lunn is somewhat unfair in not quoting the whole of Disraeli's distich, and is also verbally incorrect in the part he gives. Buckle gives it as follows:—

A topical rhetorician, mediocrated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical intonation that can at all times command an innumerable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself.

By giving only part of the indictment and by changing the "and" to "or" in the last phrase he lessens the cumulative value of the crushing rejoinder which had been so carefully prepared by Disraeli.—Mr. GEORGE F. BENSWORTH, 24, Church Hill Road, Walthamstow, E.17.

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